

DAVID R. CRAIG
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

LORRAINE T. COSTELLO
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION



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CONTACT: Thomas Foster, Media and Communications Coordinator, 410.638.3258 twfoster@harfordcountymd.gov

COUNTY AND PARTNERS TO EXPAND EDEN MILL NATURE CENTER AND PARK

(Bel Air, MD - April 24, 2008) - - In a collaborative effort that illustrates how non-profits and government can work together for the public good, Harford County, the State of Maryland, and the Harford Land Trust have announced the purchase of a 44-acre parcel adjoining Eden Mill Nature Center and Park in Pylesville.

The Harford Land Trust negotiated the terms of the agreement between the Vaughn family and a partnership of the State of Maryland's Program Open Space and the Harford County Department of Parks and Recreation. Harford Land Trust also stepped up to cover a shortfall of over \$60,000 between available funds and the appraised value.

The property includes more than 30 heavily wooded acres as well as one-half mile of stream bank along Big Branch Creek, which is consistent with the water protection strategies outlined in the County's Deer Creek Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS). Frank Marsden, Director of the Eden Mill facility said, "This collaboration goes far beyond the individuals and organizations who facilitated the purchase; it ensures that future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy the unspoiled beauty and serenity of the natural valley that surrounds Eden Mill."

In March, the State Board of Public Works approved state funding of \$671,000 for the initiative, of which \$375,000 is from the Program Open Space state share and the remaining \$276,000 is from the Program Open Space local share allocated to Harford County. Closing the gap of the appraised value, the Harford Land Trust is contributing \$64,000 from its Land Preservation Fund.

Commenting on the support received from the State of Maryland for this Program Open Space initiative, County Executive David R. Craig stated, "We are pleased the Board of Public Works supported us with this project to enhance the Eden Mill Nature Center and Park. The acquisition of this property will add to the beauty of Eden Mill."

The Harford Land Trust Board of Directors felt its financial contribution and commitment of its staff time for negotiations were well within its mission of helping landowners, private and public, to conserve land and protect the natural resources, scenic beauty, rural character, and a healthy way of life in Harford County.

"I'm very excited that we have played a critical role in the preservation of this property. Nearly doubling the park in size, it will provide expanded opportunities for school children, families, canoeists, hikers, and birders to learn about our natural world and grow in appreciation and respect," said Harry Webster, Jr., Harford Land Trust board president.

For more information about Eden Mill, log on to www.edenmill.org. For information about the Harford Land Trust, log on to www.harfordlandtrust.org